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# BANGING
# YOUR HEAD
# AGAINST A
# BRICK WALL

BANKSY

THE QUICKEST WAY TO THE
TOP OF YOUR BUSINESS

IS TO TURN IT UPSIDE DOWN

Published by Banksy

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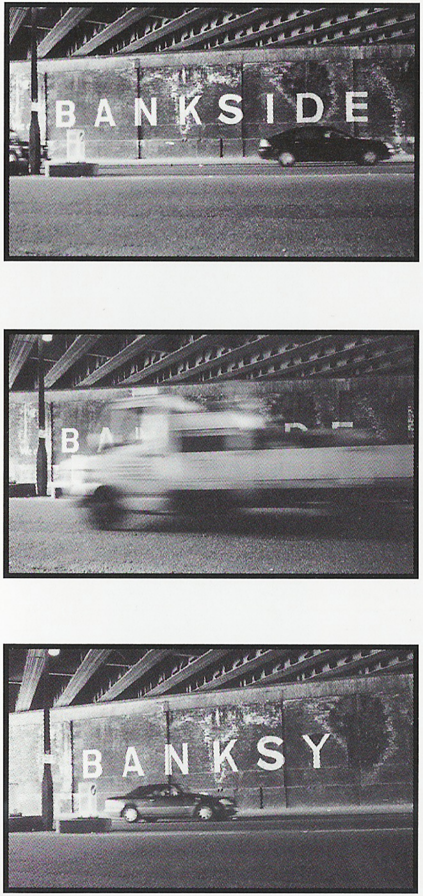
# THE SOUTH BANKSY SHOW



Southbank, London 2001

HM PRISON SERVICE
A BRISTOL Product

# BANGING YOUR HEAD AGAINST A BRICK WALL

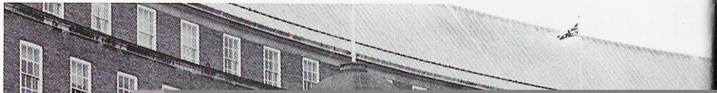
You could say that graffiti is ugly, selfish and that it's just the action of people who want some pathetic kind of fame. But if that's true it's only because graffiti writers are just like everyone else in this fucking country.

Someone recently asked me if I thought most graffiti writers were really just frustrated artists like myself. Well I'm frustrated by many things but trying to get accepted by the art world isn't one of them. This seems difficult for some people to understand - you do not paint graffiti in the vain hope that one day some big fat tory will discover you and put your pictures on his wall. If you draw on walls in public then you are already operating on a higher level. The irony is that despite having to scuttle around at night like Jack the Ripper with a marker pen, writing graffiti is about the most honest way you can be an artist. It takes no money to do it, you don't need an education to understand it, there's no admission fee and bus stops are far more interesting and useful places to have pictures than in museums.

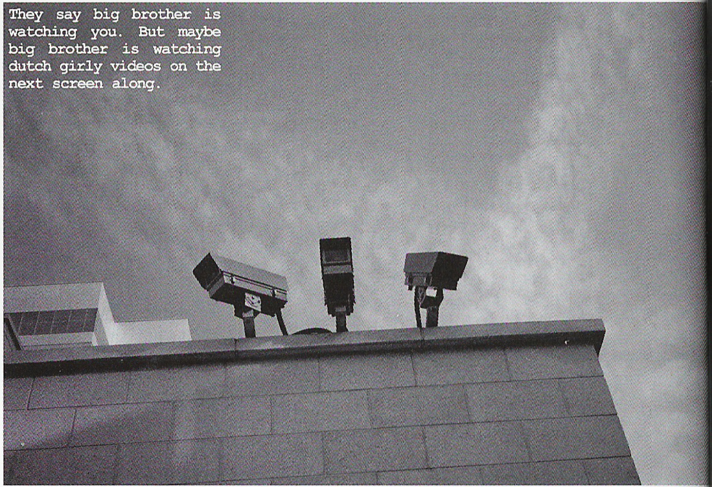
Some people think you should have better things to think about than trying to think about better things. But the instinct is still there. Life is unfair and the world is full of cripples, death and deviousness.

In response to this, painting pictures seems a pointless way to spend your time. Your average plumber does more for humanity than some git that makes abstract art or paints seaside views full of boats. At least graffiti has a fighting chance of meaning a little more to people. Graffiti has been used to start revolutions, stop wars and generally is the voice of people who aren't listened to. Graffiti is one of the few tools you have if you have almost nothing. And even if you don't come up with a picture to cure world poverty you can make someone smile while they're having a piss.

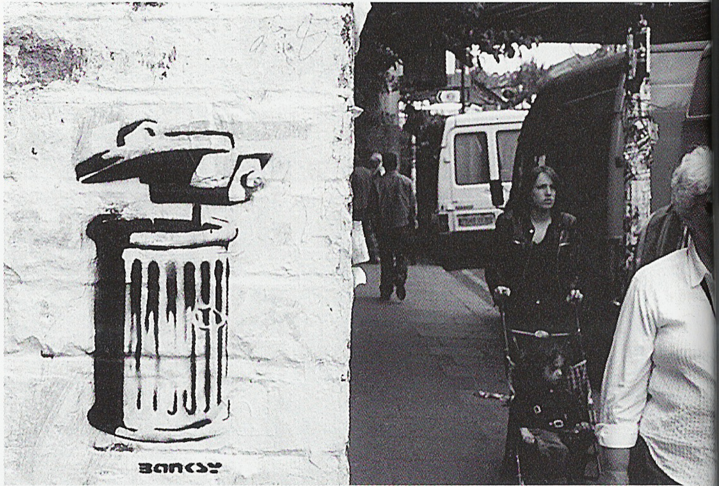
Graffiti ultimately wins out over proper art because it becomes part of your city, it's a tool; "I'll meet you in that pub, you know, the one opposite that wall with a picture of a monkey holding a chainsaw". I mean, how much more useful can a painting be than that?



# SECRETS, LIES AND BEADY LITTLE EYES

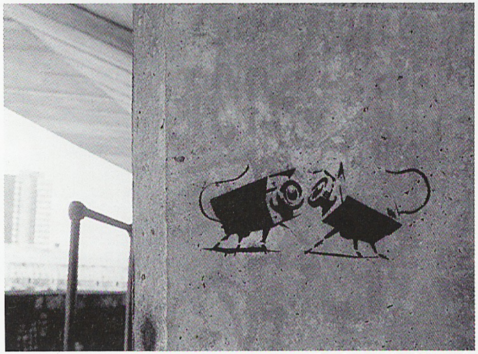


They say big brother is watching you. But maybe big brother is watching dutch girly videos on the next screen along.



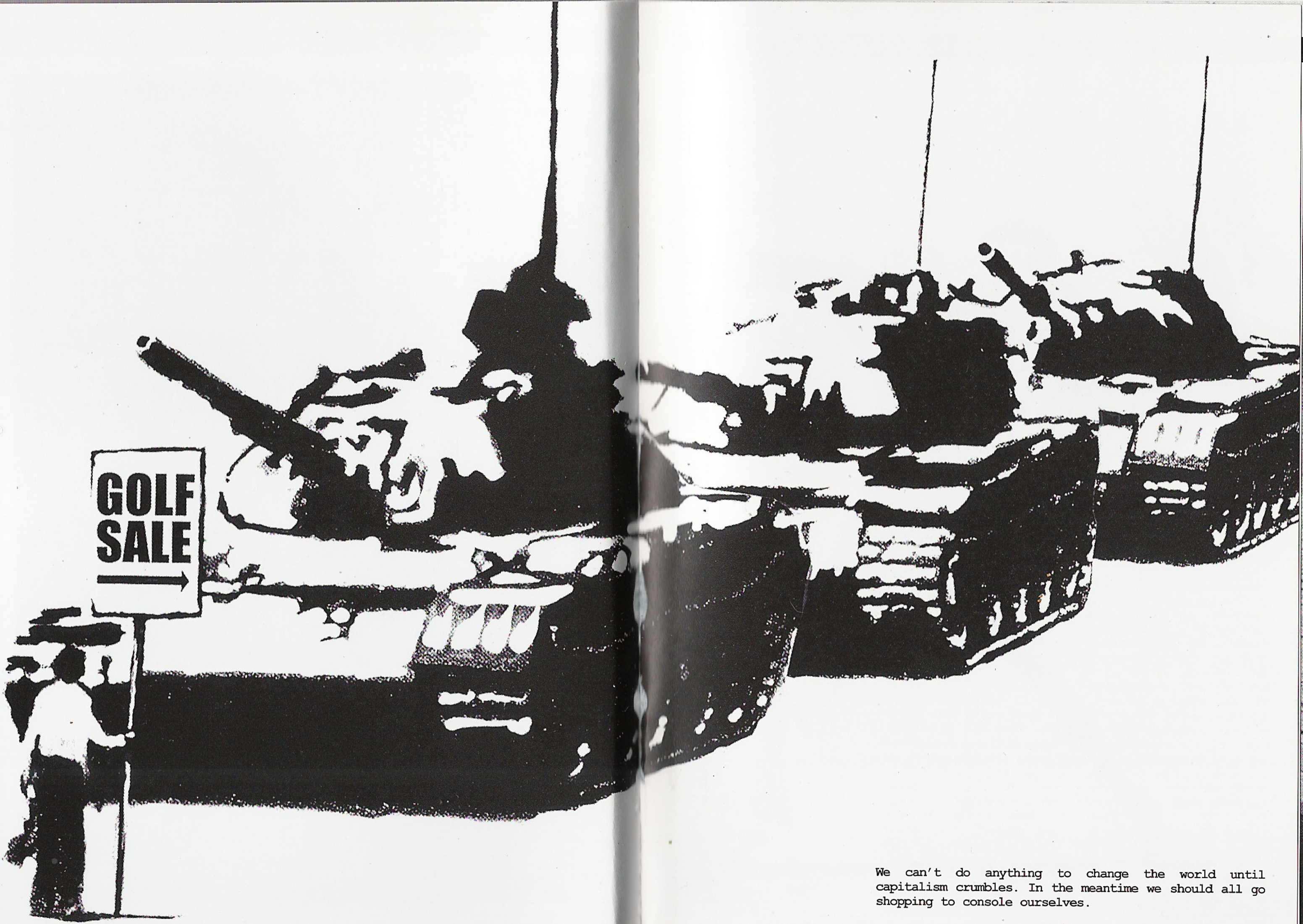
This is not
a photo
opportunity

These premises
are under
CCTV
surveillance

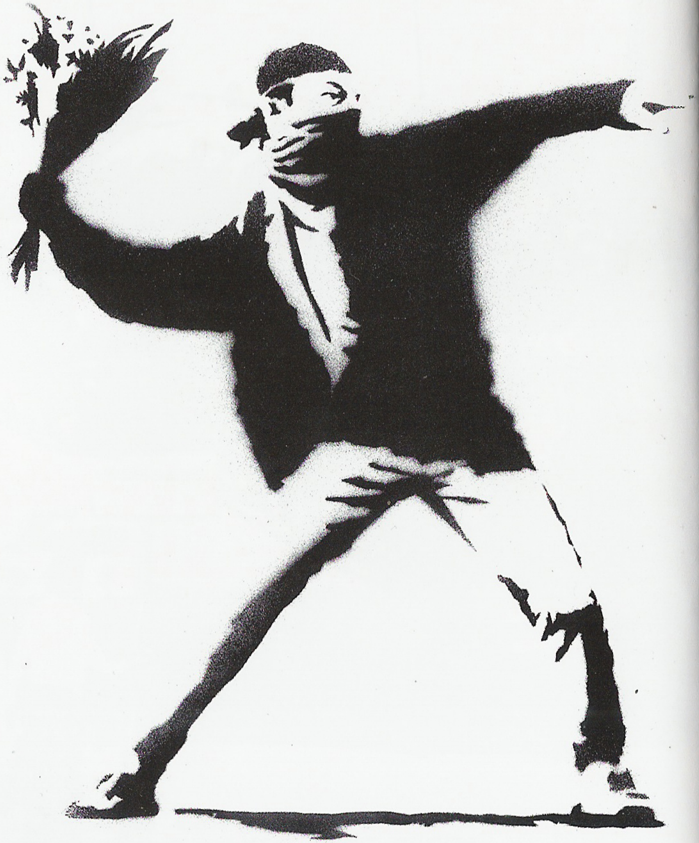


The bugs don't work

Getting paranoid is an occupational hazard of illicit street painting, which is good. Your mind is working at its best when you're being paranoid. You explore every avenue and possibility of your situation at high speed with total clarity. I'm not interested in looking at things made by people who aren't paranoid, they're not working to their full capacity.



We can't do anything to change the world until capitalism crumbles. In the meantime we should all go shopping to console ourselves.



# MANIFESTO

The corrupt and brutal regime of President Ceausescu of Romania was infamous the world over. His ferocious government had run the country emphatically for many years, crushing any signs of dissent ruthlessly. In November 1989 he was re-elected President for another five years as his supporters at Party Conference gave him forty standing ovations.

On December 21st the President, disturbed by a small uprising in the western city of Timisoara in support of a Protestant Clergyman, was persuaded to address a public rally in Bucharest.

One solitary man in the crowd, Nica Leon, sick to death with Ceausescu and the dreadful circumstances he created for everyone started shouting in favour of the revolutionaries in Timisoara. The crowd around him, obedient to the last, thought that when he shouted out "Long live Timisoara!" it was some new political slogan. They started chanting it too. It was only when he called, "Down with Ceausescu!" that they realised something wasn't quite right. Terrified, they tried to force themselves away from him, dropping the banners they had been carrying. In the crush the wooden batons on which the banners were held began to snap underfoot and women started screaming. The ensuing panic sounded like booing.

The unthinkable was happening. Ceausescu stood there on his balcony, ludicrously frozen in uncertainty, his mouth opening and shutting. Even the official camera shook with fright. Then the head of security walked swiftly across the balcony towards him and whispered "they're getting in". It was clearly audible on the open microphone and was broadcast over the whole country on live national radio.

This was the start of the revolution. Within a week Ceausescu was dead.

**Source: John Simpson BBC News.**

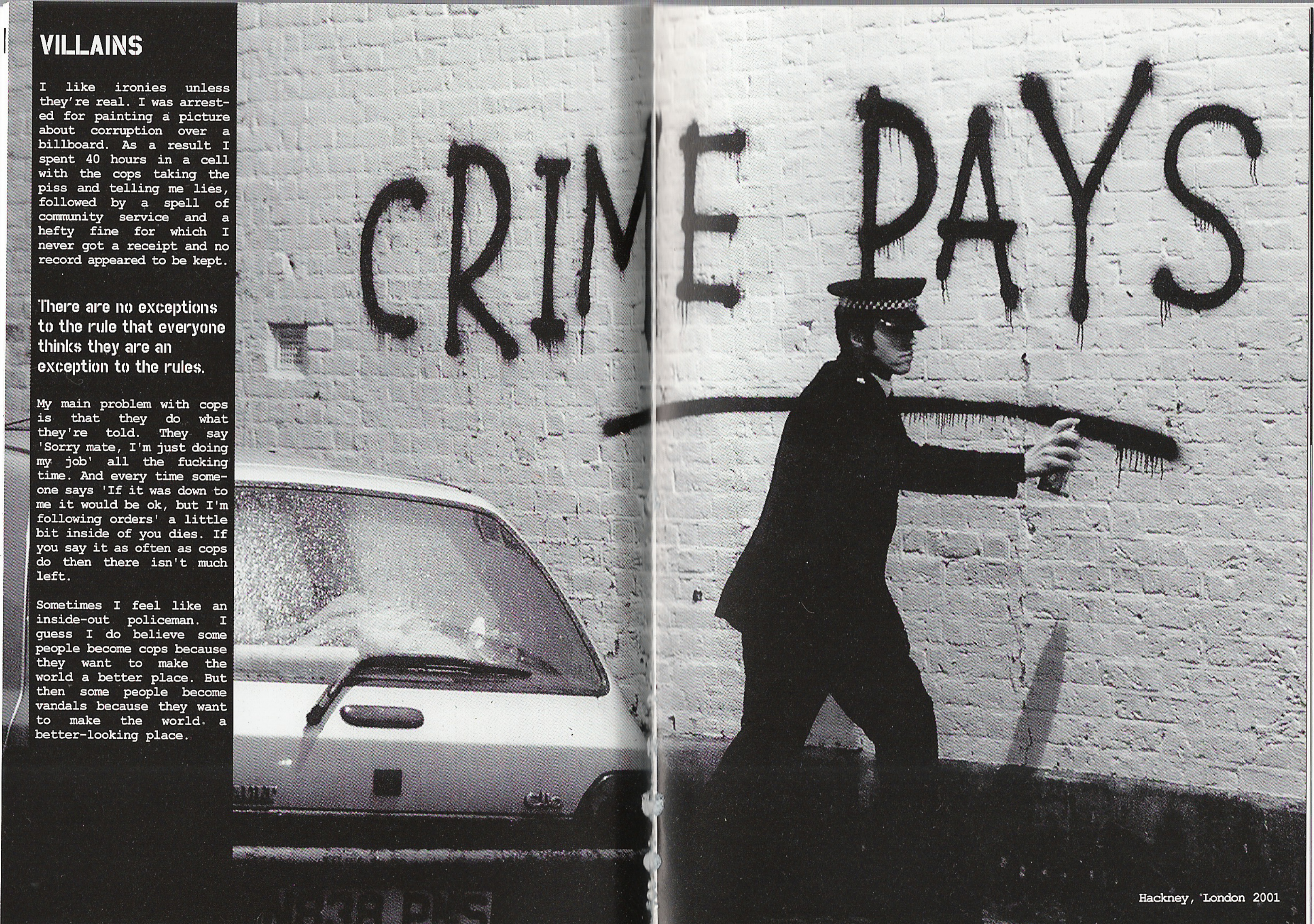
# VILLAINS

I like ironies unless they're real. I was arrested for painting a picture about corruption over a billboard. As a result I spent 40 hours in a cell with the cops taking the piss and telling me lies, followed by a spell of community service and a hefty fine for which I never got a receipt and no record appeared to be kept.

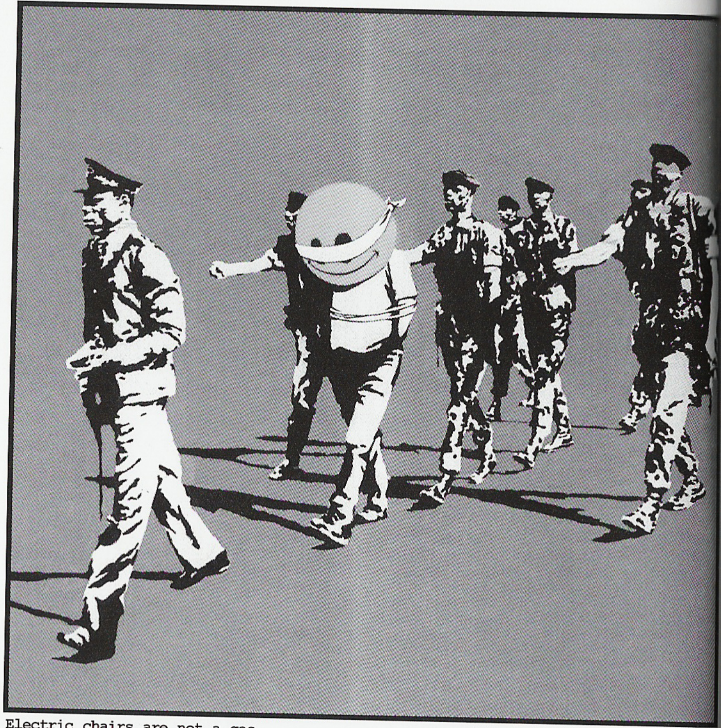
**There are no exceptions to the rule that everyone thinks they are an exception to the rules.**

My main problem with cops is that they do what they're told. They say 'Sorry mate, I'm just doing my job' all the fucking time. And every time someone says 'If it was down to me it would be ok, but I'm following orders' a little bit inside of you dies. If you say it as often as cops do then there isn't much left.

Sometimes I feel like an inside-out policeman. I guess I do believe some people become cops because they want to make the world a better place. But then some people become vandals because they want to make the world a better-looking place.



Hackney, London 2001



Electric chairs are not a gas

# ANYONE WHO BELIEVES IN CAPITAL PUNISHMENT SHOULD BE SHOT

When I was nine years old I was expelled from school. It was punishment for swinging one of my classmates round and round before dropping him onto a concrete floor. He was taken away from school by an ambulance that had to pull right into the playground and pick him up on a stretcher.

The next day I was made to stand in front of the whole school at assembly while the headmaster gave a speech about good and evil before I was sent home in disgrace.

The unfortunate part of this story is that I never actually touched the kid. It was my best friend Jimmy who had put him into casualty. Me and a boy called Martin watched Jimmy grab the kid's hand and swing him until he was too dizzy to stand up and when he let go the kid just seemed to fly off and land on his head. It wasn't even malicious, just stupid. However, Jim was a big chap for his age and could be very persuasive. So when we noticed the kid wasn't getting up Jim convinced Martin to say that it was me who had done it. The only other witness was the kid himself who didn't regain conciousness for a week.

I tried many times to explain that I hadn't done it, but the boys stuck to their story. Eventually my mum turned to me and said bitterly that I should have the guts to admit when I was wrong and that it was even more disgusting when I refused to accept what I'd done.

So I shut up after that.

The kid sustained a fractured skull and some mental problems. He couldn't remember how it had happened and he didn't return to school for a long time.

I think I was lucky to learn so young that there's no such thing as justice and there's nothing you can do about it. The more useful lesson I learnt was that there's no point in behaving yourself. You will probably be punished for something you never did anyway. People get it wrong all the time.

Anyone who believes in capital punishment should be shot.

# PESTS CONTROL

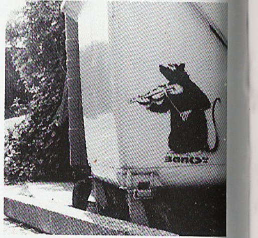
I was at home drawing and listening to Radio One late at night when the dj became so annoying I grabbed some paint and drove to the studios on New Cavendish Street. I'd just stuck a stencil of a rat playing on some turntables to the side of the building when a riot van pulled round the corner. I started walking off as the van drove past and took the next corner. I turned back and got my paint out just as the same van pulled up again, having just gone round the block. I straightened up and walked to my car as the cops pulled up very slowly and stopped 20 yards up the road.

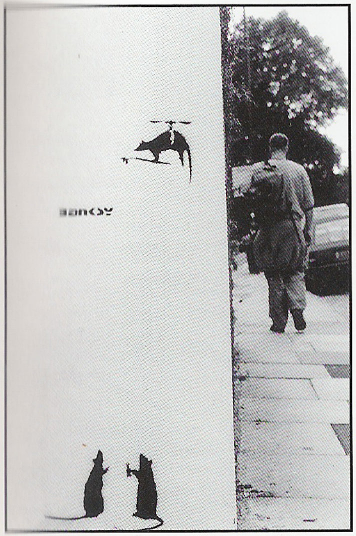
I'm pretending to check paperwork on the passenger seat as the stencil, still taped to the building, flaps in the breeze ten feet away, with a full can of paint sat on the floor in front of it. I'm sitting there for what feels like a very long time trying to work out if the cops saw the stencil as a big saloon car pulls up behind me and out gets Zoe Ball and her driver. He opens her door and she goes into the building.

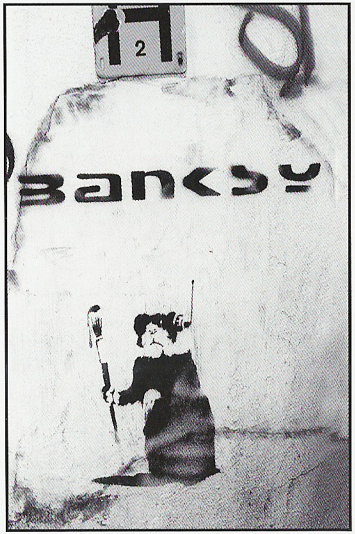
I'm still watching the riot van when I notice Zoe Ball's driver has come over and picked up my can of paint, inspecting it closely. I turn on my engine as a cop finally gets out of the van and walks over.

I hear him say "Excuse me Sir, can I have a look at that?" in a patronising way. The driver suddenly looks a bit perturbed. As I'm pulling out he's laughing nervously and turning out his pockets.

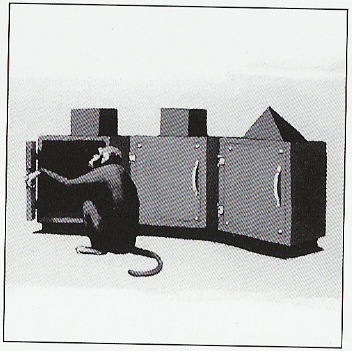
**Win the rat race and you're still a rat**

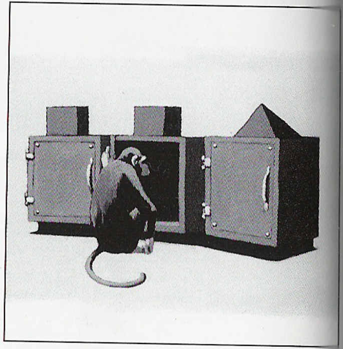


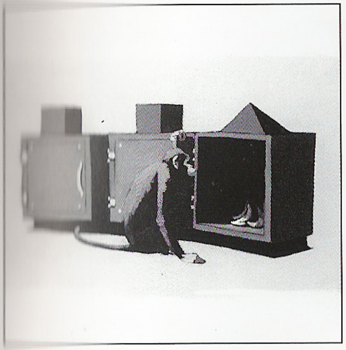


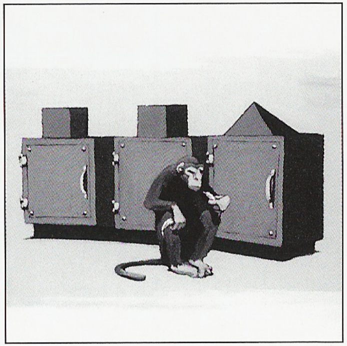


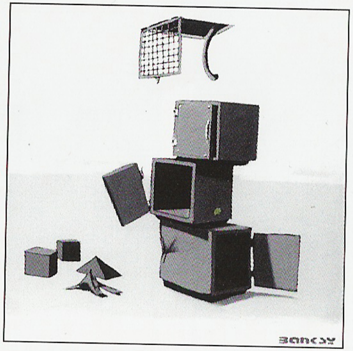
# SIMPLE INTELLIGENCE TESTING IN DUMB ANIMALS





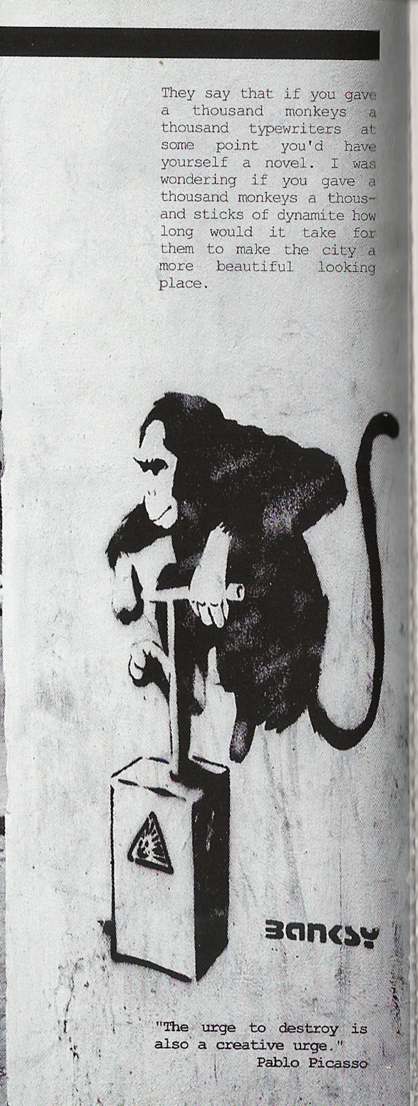






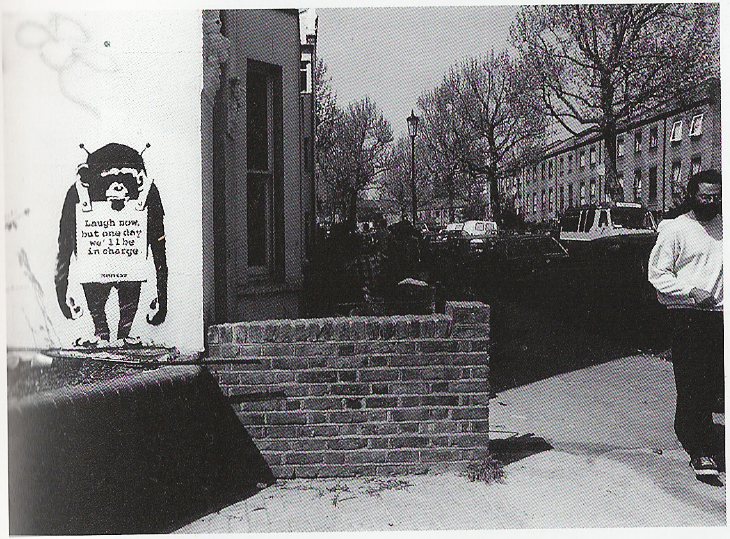
A lot of people never use their initiative, because no-one told them to.

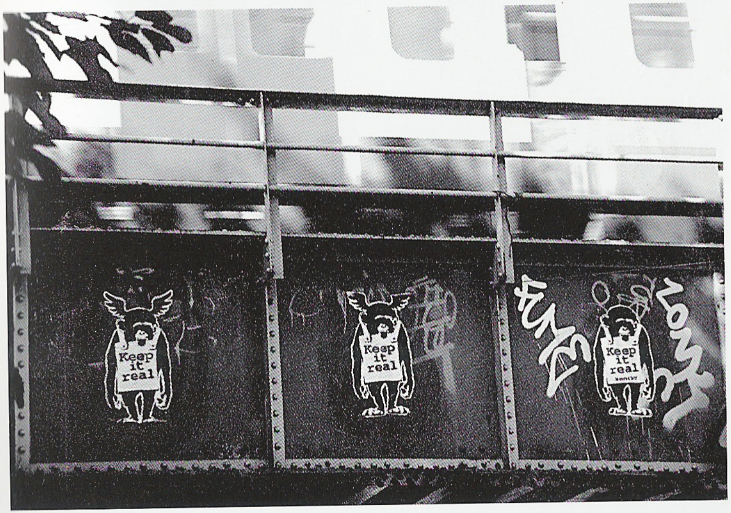
# CHEEKY MONKEY



They say that if you gave a thousand monkeys a thousand typewriters at some point you'd have yourself a novel. I was wondering if you gave a thousand monkeys a thousand sticks of dynamite how long would it take for them to make the city a more beautiful looking place.

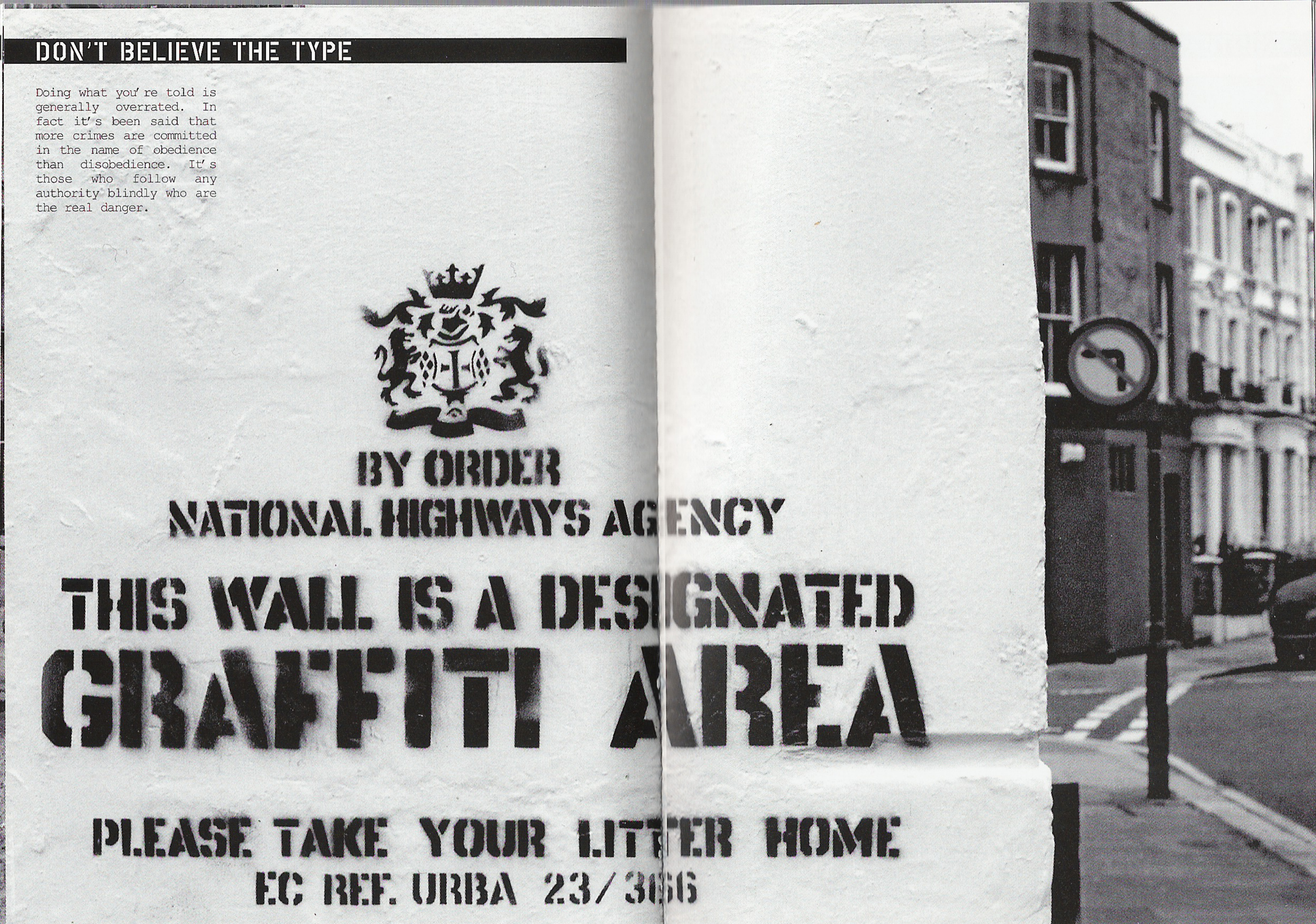
"The urge to destroy is also a creative urge."
Pablo Picasso


Laugh now, but one day we'll be in charge
BANKSY


Keep it real
Keep it real
Keep it real
BANKSY

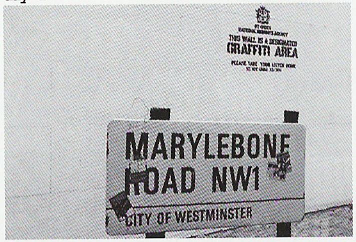
## DON'T BELIEVE THE TYPE

Doing what you're told is generally overrated. In fact it's been said that more crimes are committed in the name of obedience than disobedience. It's those who follow any authority blindly who are the real danger.

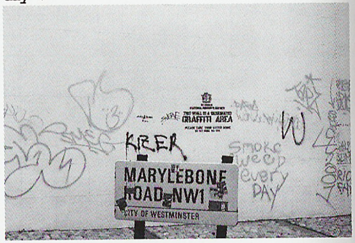

BY ORDER
NATIONAL HIGHWAYS AGENCY
THIS WALL IS A DESIGNATED
GRAFFITI AREA
PLEASE TAKE YOUR LITTER HOME
EC REF. URBA 23/3656

## EXISTENCILISM

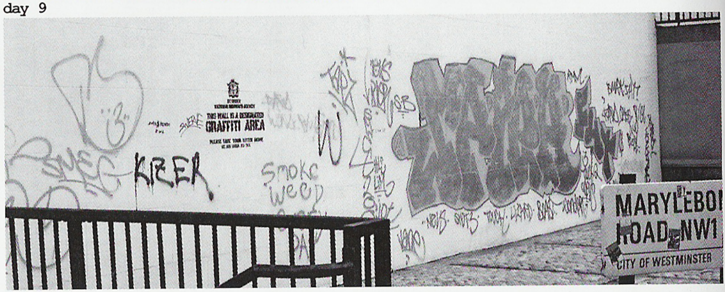
day 1


THIS WALL IS A DESIGNATED
GRAFFITI AREA
MARYLEBONE
ROAD NW1
CITY OF WESTMINSTER

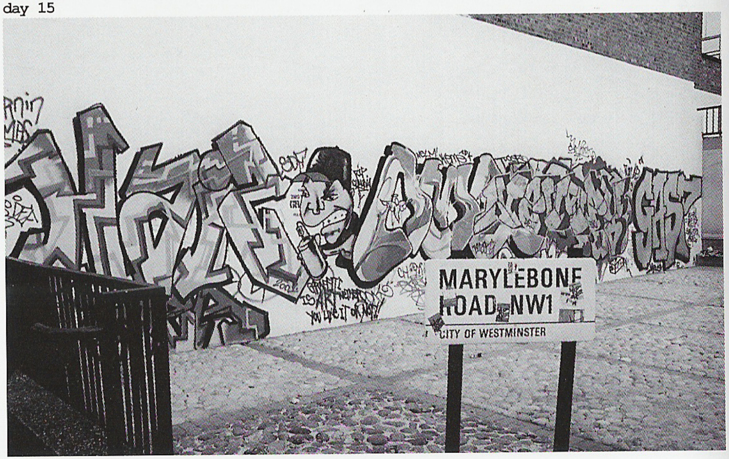
day 7


GRAFFITI AREA
KRER
MARYLEBONE
ROAD NW1
CITY OF WESTMINSTER
Smoke weed every DAY

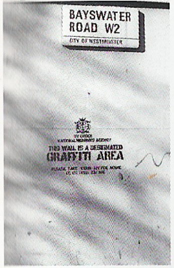
day 9


THIS WALL IS A DESIGNATED
GRAFFITI AREA
KRER
Smoke weed
MARYLEBON
ROAD NW1
CITY OF WESTMINSTER

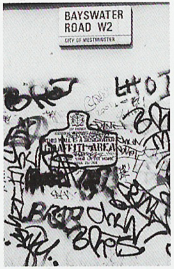
day 15


MARYLEBONE
ROAD NW1
CITY OF WESTMINSTER

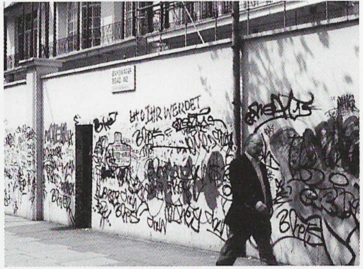
day 1


BAYSWATER
ROAD W2
CITY OF WESTMINSTER
THIS WALL IS A DESIGNATED
GRAFFITI AREA

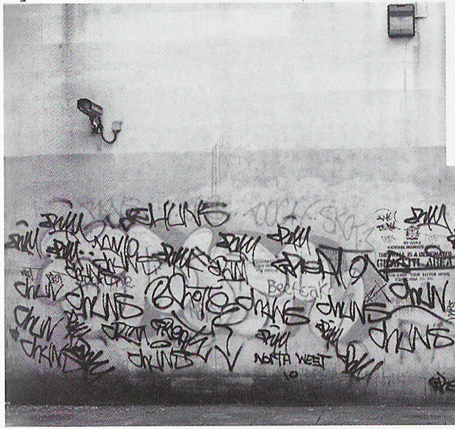
day 12


BAYSWATER
ROAD W2
CITY OF WESTMINSTER
GRAFFITI AREA

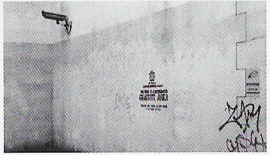
day 18



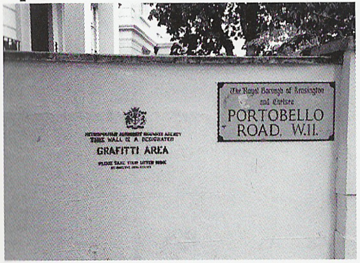
day 15


F*K The Public
NORTH WEST

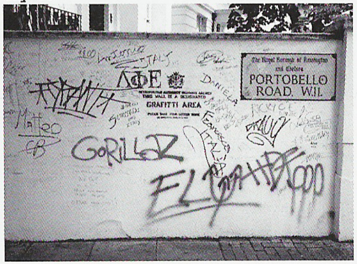
day 1



day 1


The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
PORTOBELLO
ROAD. W.11.
THIS WALL IS A DESIGNATED
GRAFITTI AREA

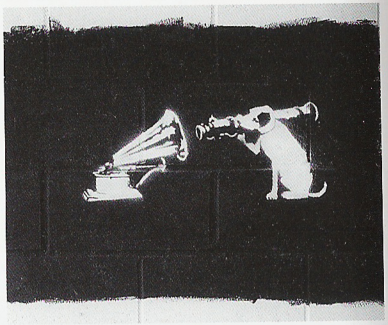
day 25

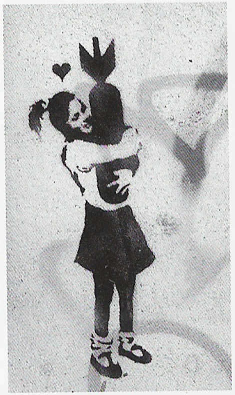

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
PORTOBELLO
ROAD. W.11.
GRAFFITI AREA
GORILLAZ

# WEAPONS OF MASS DISTRACTION

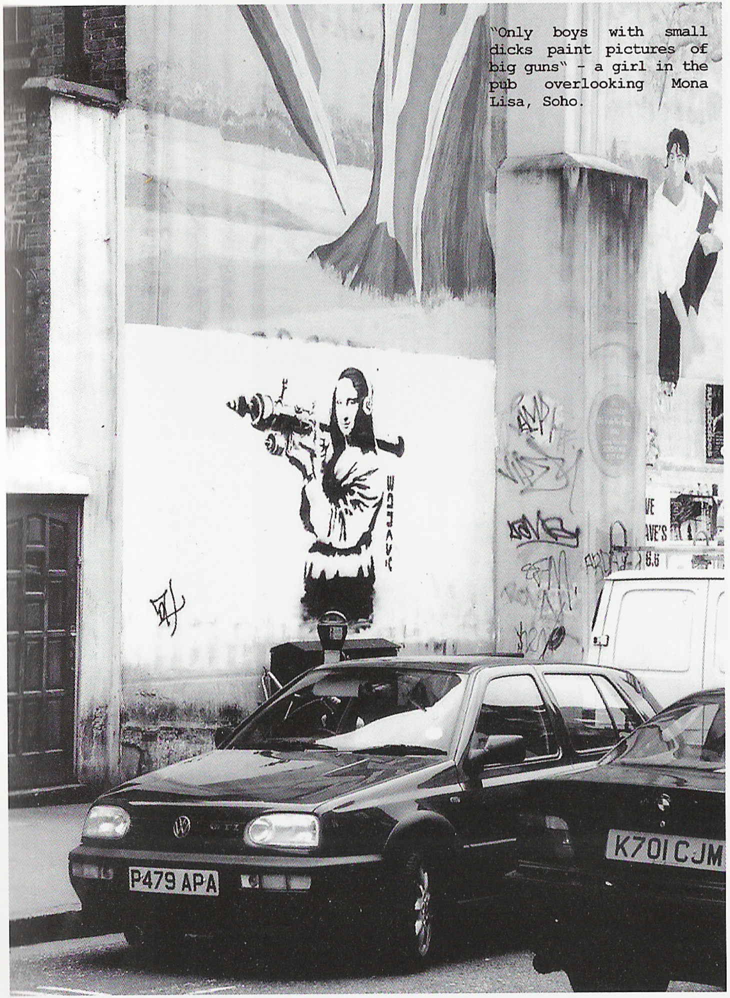
People are fond of using military terms to describe what they do. We call it bombing when we go out painting, when of course it's more like entertaining the troops in a neutral zone, during peacetime in a country without an army.

Why all the bombs? Because it's healthy to think about bombs all the time, because it's difficult to get your head round the fact that humans have the hardware available to make their entire species extinct. Nobody talks about it anymore but they say this is why we've all become so into money, because at the back of our minds we all know that atomic bombs have taken our future away from us.

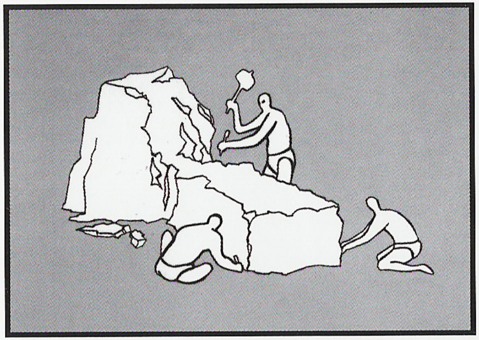


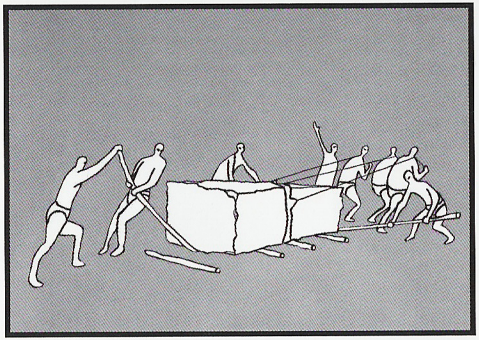


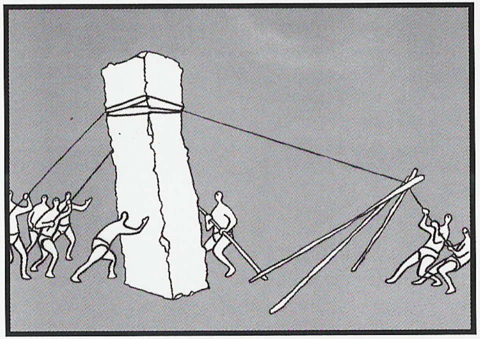
A wall is a very big weapon. It's one of the nastiest things you can hit someone with.

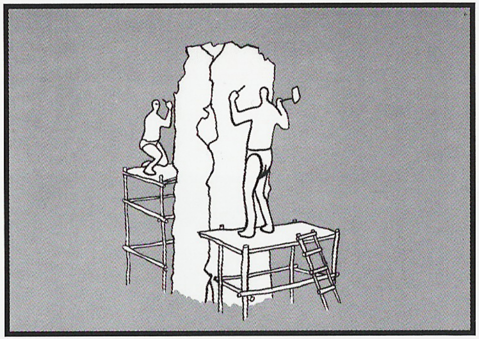


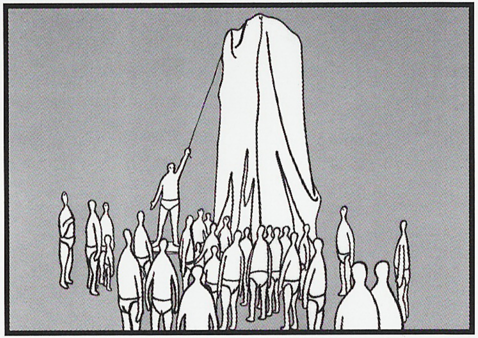
"Only boys with small dicks paint pictures of big guns" - a girl in the pub overlooking Mona Lisa, Soho.

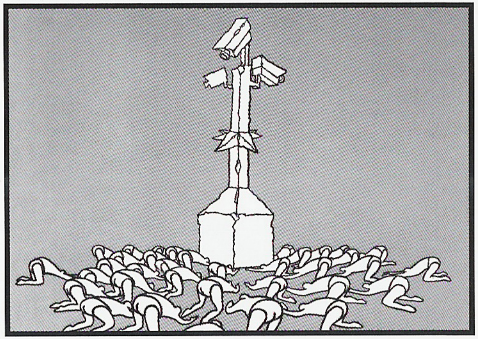






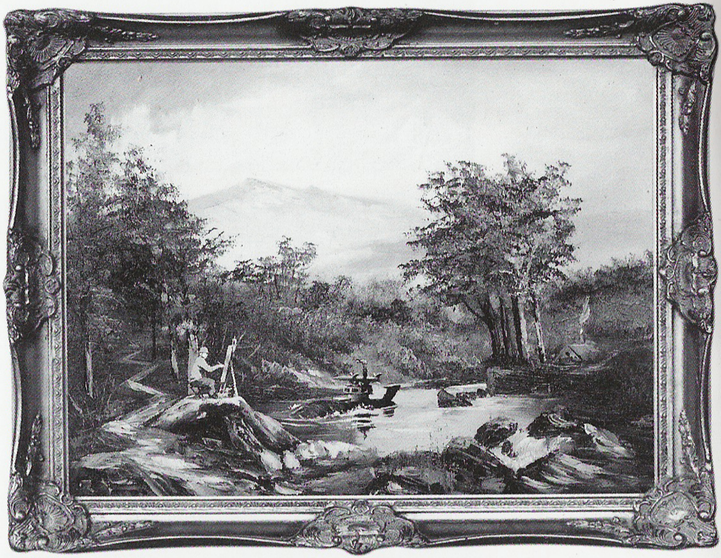




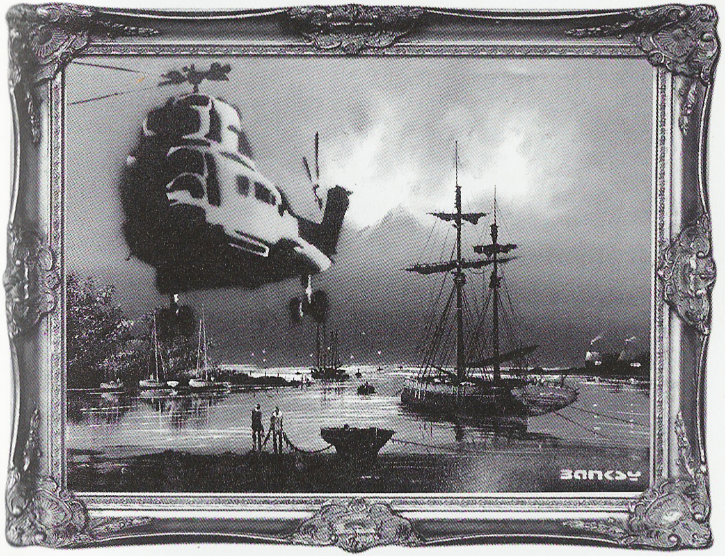


# ONLY THE RIDICULOUS SURVIVE

Vandalised oil paintings

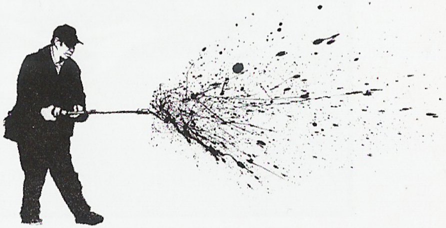


Urine the money, urine the money

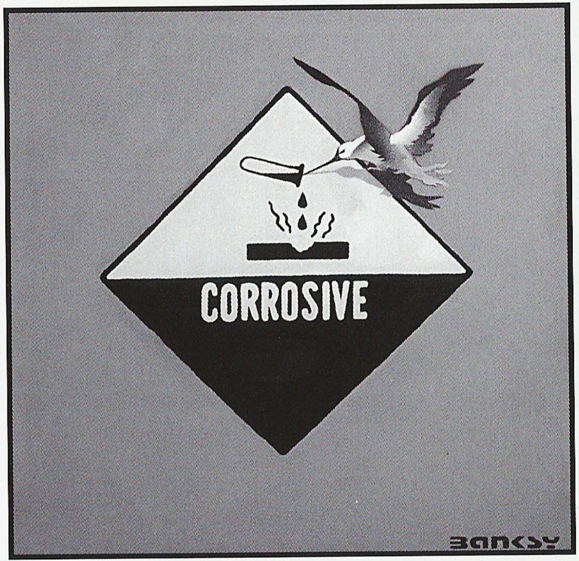


Call The Antiques Roadshow, it's a fucking classic

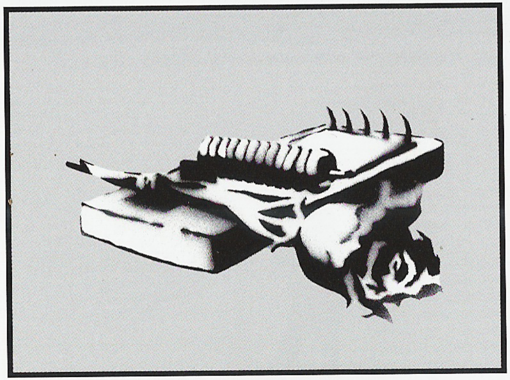
Someone famous once said: "It takes two people to make a piece of art. One person to make the art and another person to stop them from destroying it." Which is more poetic than saying: "It takes two people to make a piece of art. One person to make the art and another person to come round later from the council and sand-blast it off."



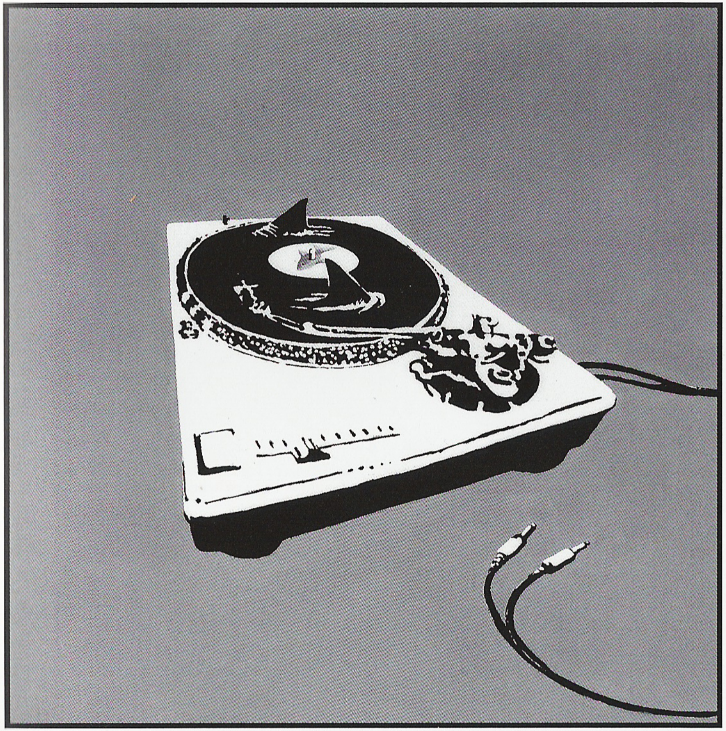
# EVERY PICTURE TELLS A LIE



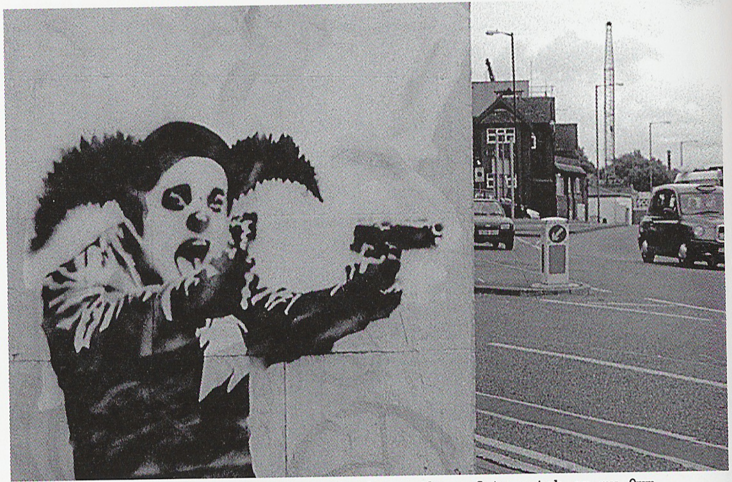
Beauty is in the eye of the eroder



It's great when you love someone so much
you can sleep with other people behind
their back and it doesn't even matter

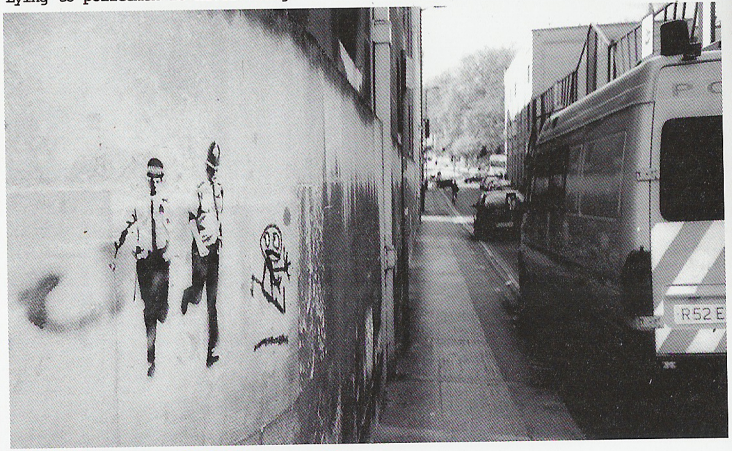


"Only when the last tree has been cut down and the last
river has dried up will man realise that reciting red
indian proverbs makes you sound like a fucking muppet"



Every time I hear the word culture I release the safety catch on my 9mm

Lying to policemen is never wrong

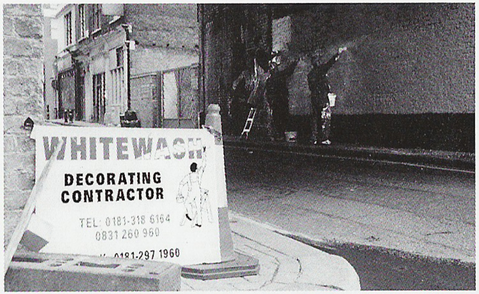


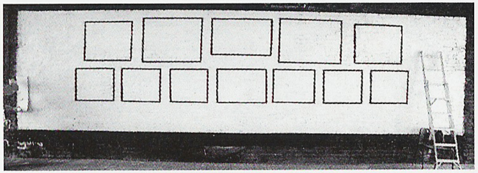
# ZEN AND THE ART OF MINDLESS VANDALISM

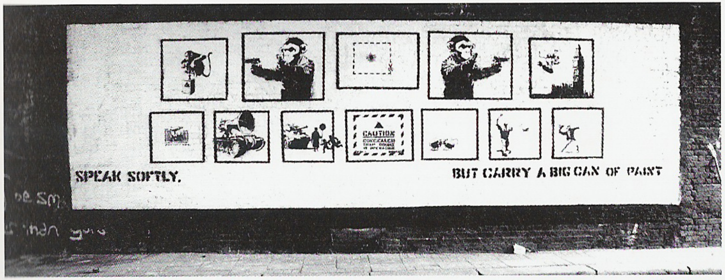
We came out of a pub one night arguing about how easy it would be to hold an exhibition in London without asking for anyone's permission. As we walked through a tunnel in shoreditch someone said: "You're wasting your time, why would you want to paint pictures in a dump like this?"

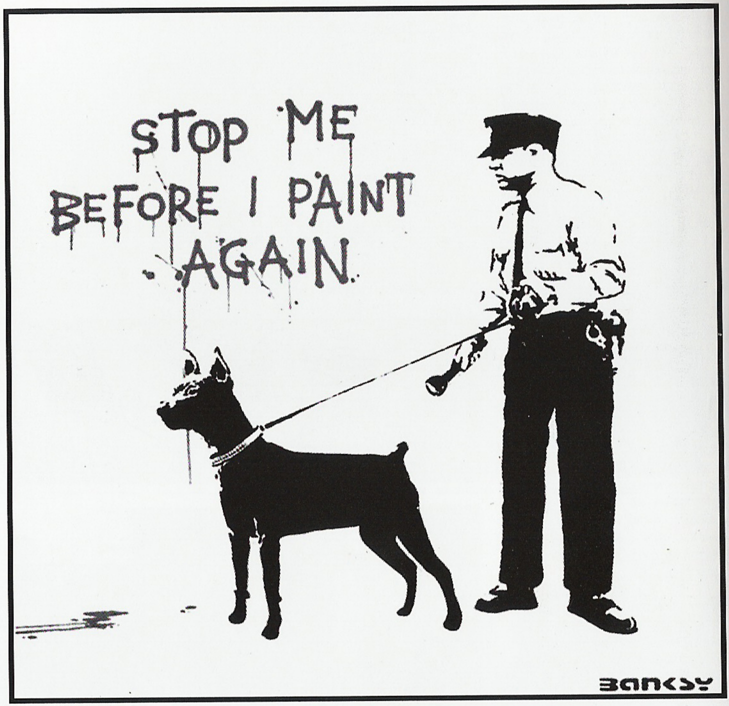
A week later we came back to the same tunnel with two buckets of paint and a letter. The letter was a forged invoice from a mickey mouse Arts organisation wishing us luck with the 'Tunnel Vision mural project'. We hung up some decorators signs nicked off a building site and painted the walls white wearing overalls. We got the artwork up in twenty five minutes and held an opening party later that week with beers and some hip hop pumping out the back of a transit van.

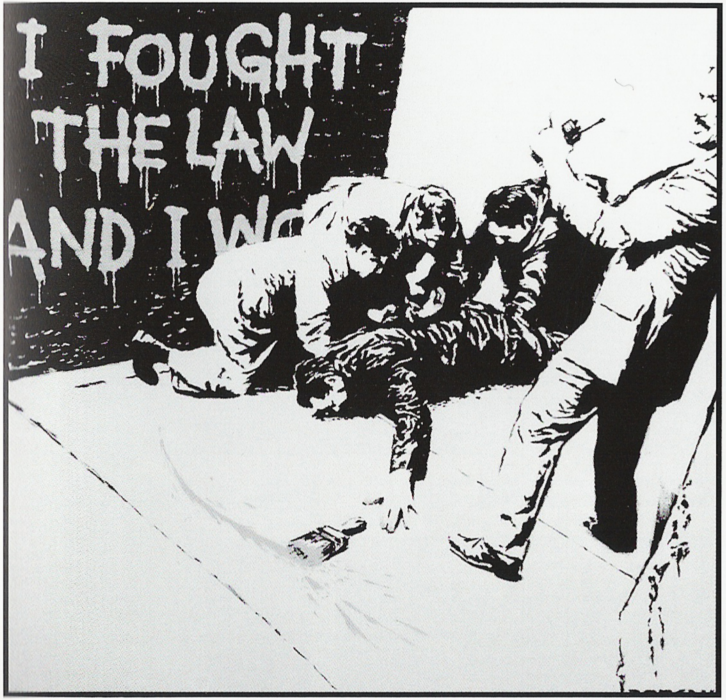
Six months later someone knocked a hole in the wall and built a superclub in the middle of the piece. If I had a pound for every time that happened.


WHITEWASH
DECORATING CONTRACTOR
TEL: 0181-318 6164
0831 260 960
0181-297 1960




CAUTION
SPEAK SOFTLY.
BUT CARRY A BIG CAN OF PAINT


STOP ME BEFORE I PAINT AGAIN
BANKSY


I FOUGHT THE LAW AND I WO

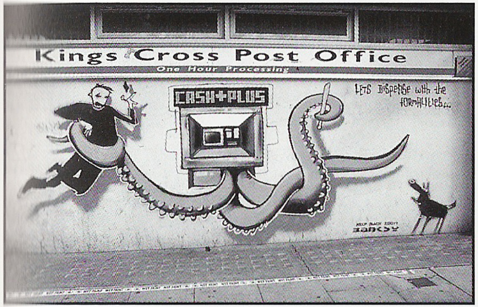
I'm walking home at 7am after a night doing loads of damage when I turned the corner onto my street and see a police car parked directly opposite my house on the garage forecourt. I look straight ahead and keep walking but just as I get to the gate I see the blue lights start flashing and the siren goes off. I panic, drop the stencils and turn to run. When I look back I see the beaming face of a mechanic behind the wheel, flashing me a big Jamaican smile as he turns the siren on and off again. I stand there as his boss comes out of the garage and tells him to knock it off, but the bastard is still laughing at me.

# I LOVE THE SMELL OF VANDALISM EARLY IN THE MORNING

metro espresso
BANKSY

**A beginners guide to painting with stencils**

- Draw or copy your image on a piece of paper.
- Glue the paper onto a bit of card using good glue.
- Cut straight through drawing and card at the same time using a very sharp knife. Snap off blades are best. The sharper your knife the better the stencil looks. As the Grim Reaper said to his new apprentice: "You must learn the compassion suitable to your trade - a fucking sharp edge."
- Ideal card should be about 1.5mm thick - much fatter and it's too difficult and boring to cut through. Any thinner and it gets sloppy too quick.
- Find an unassuming piece of card as a folder to hold your stencil in and leave the house before you think of something more comfortable you coud be doing.
- Get a small roll of gaffa tape and pre-tear small strips ready to attach stencil to the wall.
- Shake and test can of paint before you leave. Cheap British paint is fine but some brands bleed more than others. Matt finish comes out better and dries quicker.
- Apply paint sparingly.
- Wear a hat.
- Move around the city quickly. Acting like a sad old drunk if you attract attention.
- Pace yourself and repeat as often as you feel inadequate and no-one listens to a word you say.

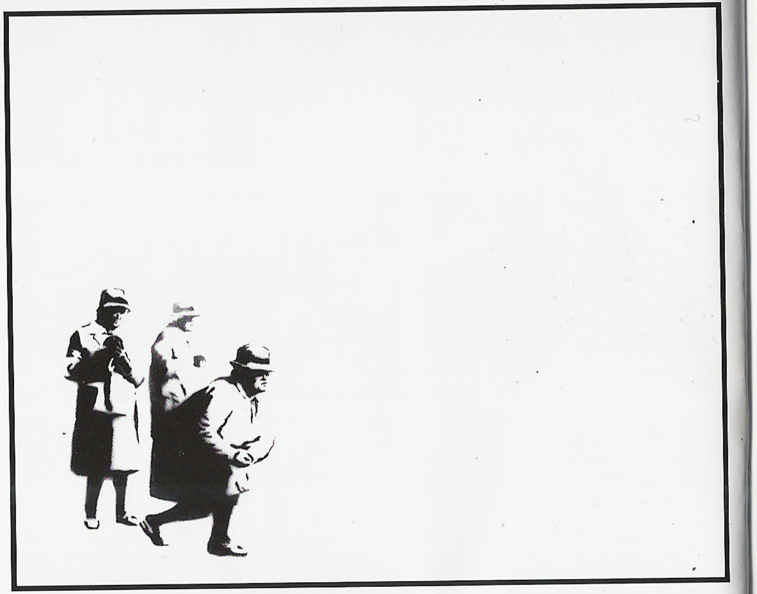

Kings Cross Post Office
One Hour Processing
CASH+PLUS
LETS DISPENSE with the FORMALITIES...
BANKSY

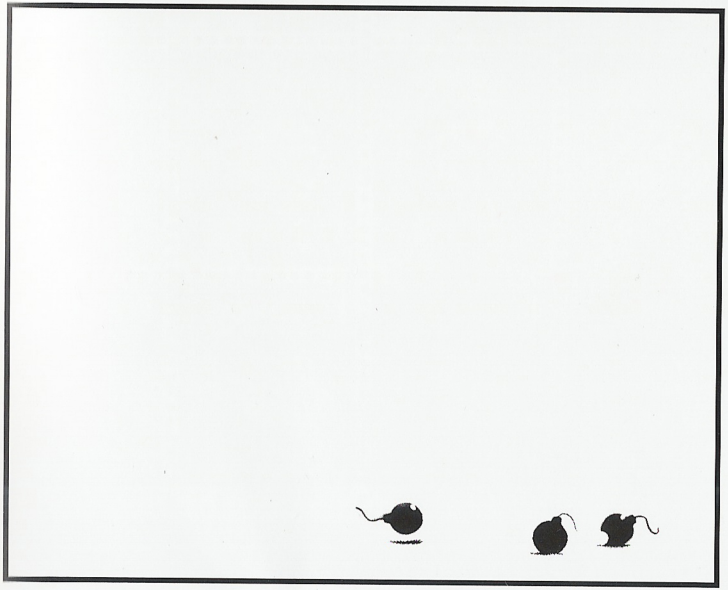
31454 31762

Never paint graffiti in a town where they still point at aeroplanes

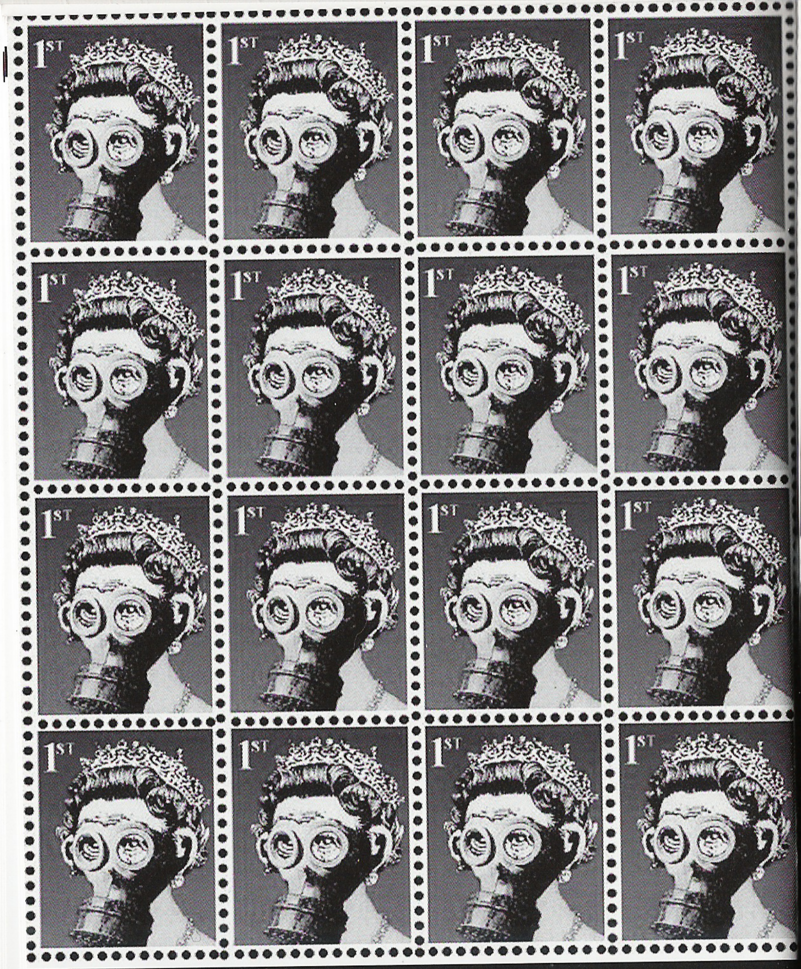
C-552-2 BANKSY PEST CONTROL

# BOMB MIDDLE ENGLAND





People who get up early in the morning cause war, death and famine.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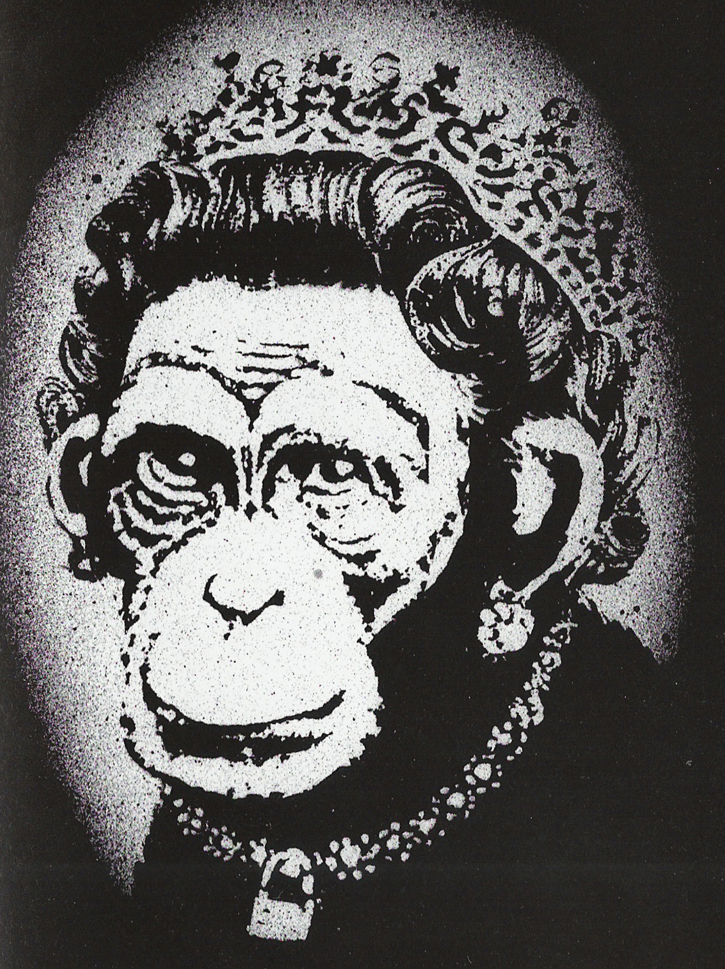
DERIDE AND CONQUER

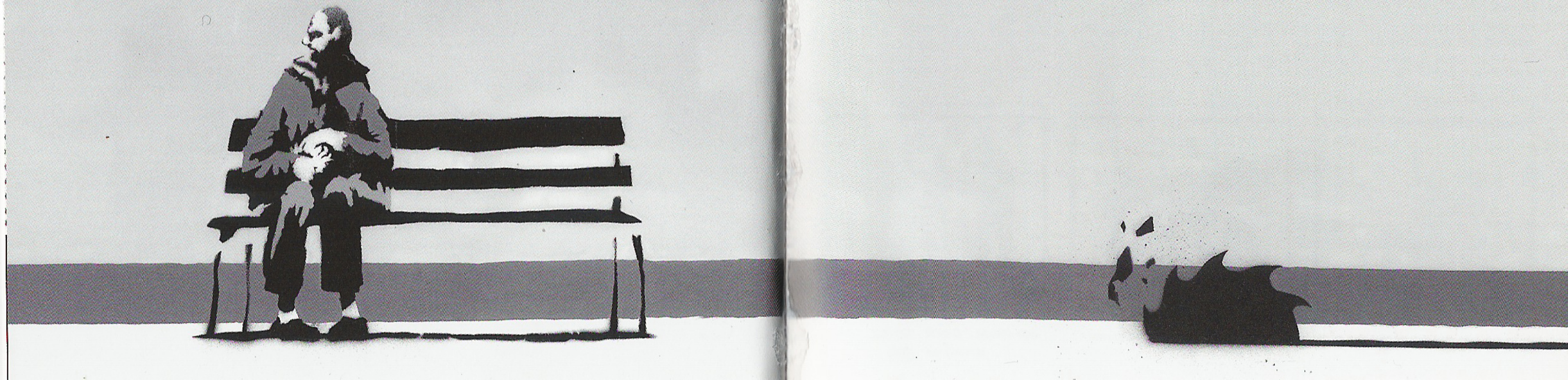


Who sacked all the clowns?

Weston Super Mare

"It's a little bit embarrasing to have been concerned with the human problem all one's life and find at the end that one has no more to offer than 'Try to be a little kinder'."

Aldous Huxley



# YOUR LETTERS

Banksy
I first became aware of your work through sleazenation and that busta rhymes cover. I would be grateful if you could tell me where else I can catch any other pieces of your work in shoreditch or the rest of london.
I have just started work as a car park attendant, night shift in swiss cottage. The car park is XXXXXXXX and is partially underground. There are a lot of crappy tags but there is great scope to do something there. I am only working there for another six weeks so if you are interested mail me.

Lexbudda

Dear XXXXXXX
We received the artwork roughs from your client Banksy today with some disapointment. He does not appear to have understood the project brief which we supplied to you and his ideas fall somewhat short of what we were anticipating. As I have explained previously nothing of an offensive or overtly political nature sits comfortably with the XXXXXXX brand image. Although we are aiming at a more 'edgy' feel in this campaign the images he supplied are entirely unsuitable. I regret to say myself and XXXXXXXX feel there is little point in continuing to seek Banksy's contribution to the rest of the campaign. Please note that the agreed design fee will not be released until all outstanding artwork relating to this project is submitted to our office. Best wishes for the future

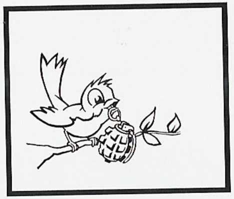
XXXXXXXX

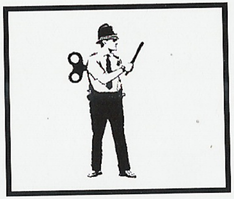
Yes Banksy,
Just a quick note to say thanks for all the pictures. I live in Montpelier and we have two of your pieces at the end of our street. Thought you might be interested to know we had the police here last week because a neighbour was burgled and I asked them what they think of your stuff. One said he thought that stick man on the side of the police station was funny and they hope they don't catch you.
All the best

Andy

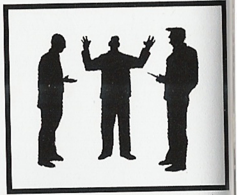
Banksy
I read in Level magazine that you are trying to etch grafitti into limestone but were unsure of how to do it. I did a little work with steel plate etching, we would use a laquer to coat the back of the plates to stop them dissolving. This could then be removed with meths. The acid we used was about 20% nitric acid, but any reasonably strong acid should do the trick, ie pickling vinegar...

Ed, School of
Chemistry, University
of Bristol





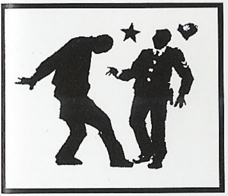
Mindless authority figures in operation



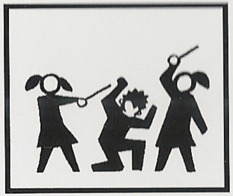
But you already mugged me once, back there ten minutes ago

Time to raise the steaks

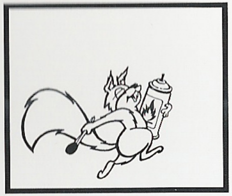
Emails should be sent to: banksy@banksy.co.uk
Banging your head against a brick wall, Vol 1 is dedicated to the good people of Bristol. Additional lyrics by Mike Tyler, layout by Jez Tucker, photography by Steve Lazarides. Further copies available from selected bookshops & www.banksy.co.uk



Bacon butty served here



Kill Gary Glitter



"Nearly a hundred pictures are featured here. Each and every one of them a pathetic cry for help."

The Guardian

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